

# Trail Safety and Etiquette

## Trail Safety

District trails and facilities are generally very safe. However, you are entering an environment where there are some naturally occurring hazards. Reasonable caution and common sense should be utilized when venturing into any outdoor environment. Your safety is your responsibility!

## General Precautions

It is strongly recommended that you do not hike alone.

Dress for the environment. Temperature extremes can be experienced and you should dress in layers. Dress appropriately for the location, time of year and planned activities. Apply sunscreen and drink plenty of water prior to and during your outdoor activities. Drinking water is not available at the preserves so you should bring your own.

In keeping with a wilderness ethos, District improvements often times only consist of gravel or dirt staging areas, trails or patrol roads, occasional restrooms, and a minimum of signs. Obtain maps in advance of your trip from this website or by calling (650) 691-1200.

Let someone know which preserves and trails you will be on, and when you intend to return. Call your contact upon your return to let them know that you have safely returned to avoid unnecessarily starting a search. Give your contact the District's emergency contact telephone number (650) 968-4411, but please stress that this is an emergency number, similar to calling 911.

Be aware that cellular telephone coverage is very sporadic on the preserves. District rangers and other field staff are equipped with radios, and can assist in case of emergencies. In the event that you experience an emergency on District lands (fire, accident, or other immediate threat to life or property), contact the District's emergency dispatch center at (650) 968-4411. This phone number is for emergency use only. For any other District business, call (650) 691-1200.

## Trail Conditions

Trail conditions can vary depending on the time of year, storms which have occurred, and the impact of rain and other natural occurrences. Check the **Trail Conditions** for up to date information on trail conditions.

## Specific Hazards

While visiting the open space preserves, there are certain hazards, such as those from wildlife and poison oak, or other natural or man-made hazards visitors may encounter. Some trails are rugged and steep and some lead to rugged and remote parts of a preserve. These risks are a natural part of the preserve and visitors must be aware of and willing to accept these risks. Some of these risks are listed below.

Visit **Wildlife Safety** for more information on what to do if you encounter rattle snake, mountain lion or coyote.

Poison oak grows on most preserves; learn to identify and avoid it in all seasons.

Be aware that ticks are active in this area and may carry diseases. Stay on designated trails and check yourself frequently for ticks.

### Trail Etiquette

Each week, thousands of visitors, including hikers, runners, bicyclists, equestrians, people with disabilities, and people walking their dogs, use the District's trails. With so many types of trails and users, it is crucial that visitors understand how to share the trails with others so that all preserve visitors may have a safe, pleasant experience.

A variety of uses is permitted on some of the District's trails, while others are limited to specific or single uses. Following these basic trail etiquette guidelines will ensure an enjoyable visit for everyone:

- Please be courteous to other trail users.
- Always yield to equestrians. Allow other trail users to pass. When in a group, avoid blocking the trail.
- Stay alert. Horses and slower moving individuals may be startled by faster moving trail users.
- Announce yourself when approaching another visitor, especially from behind.
- Prevent injury to yourself and damage to natural resources by staying on designated trails.
- Observe the 15-mph trail speed limit; 5-mph when passing.
- Bicyclists must wear helmets.

A District brochure entitled "[Sharing the Trails](#)" provides further information.